

Japanese Perfins Revisited

Paul Mistretta (LN-111)

To the best of my knowledge, the 3rd edition of Adachi's catalog of the perfins of Japan published in 1980 is the most recent edition of this invaluable catalog. The single biggest drawback to this catalog for the average American collector is that it is in Japanese, a script few of us read,, presenting information in a language few of us can translate. A second problem for most of us is the layout of the catalog itself; being laid out in a pattern different from ours due to the fact that patterns are in both block Roman characters we recognize and in Japanese katana or kanji characters.

Two very useful references are to be found in the Perfins Club Library:

- English version of Japanese perfin catalog:
Prepared by Sunao Adachi
- Using the Adachi Japanese perfins catalog
by George A. Fisher, Jr.

A third general reference relating the history of Japanese perfins is available in a back issue of *The Perfins Bulletin*. The article "An Introduction to Japanese Perfins" by Eugene Alpern (#2049) appeared on p. 45-47 of the March 1986 issue (Vol. 39 No. 3).

In concert the two bulleted references give a translation of all of the relevant text and index materials in this catalog to make it a very useful tool – even if you, like I am, are essentially illiterate when it comes to the Japanese language. Fisher's work translates (transliterates?) the index from the Adachi catalog with commentary as to the meaning of the translation, which is invaluable to Japanese-challenged readers like me. Adachi, in his translation, deals with the textual materials of the catalog. Included in this material is a brief overview of use-history of perfins in Japan. Also included in

the Adachi work is an English language translation of the user names for about 520 of the (about) 665 patterns catalogued. In addition, on the photocopy of this article (in Floyd Walker's files sent to me by Myra Walker when I took over editing the *Bulletin*), there are 15 new identifications and a couple of edits made to older IDs, hand written on the pages.

Thus we have the basic tools we need to effectively use this catalog and annotate a collection of Japanese perfins if we so desire. But we also have at least one minor problem and one opportunity.

The minor problem is (and this is in no way a criticism) that the English translation is just that – as most translations are - is not in very readable prose. Sentences like "Imperfect punched copies often to be taken as a new discovery..." are not intuitively understood by the general collector. Imperfectly punched copies are often taken to be newly discovered patterns – is maybe a little clearer on the first reading. So the minor problem can easily be resolved by transliterating the translation – which I do below (with apology for any errors I may create.)

The opportunity is speculative, based on the fact that this catalog has already passed its 25th birthday. It would seem that in the intervening years more than the 15 patterns noted in handwriting on the photocopy to hand would have been identified as to primary user. And, possibly, new patterns would have been found. So, after the transliteration of Adachi's English version of his text, I present a listing of the patterns for which no user identification is listed on the photocopies I have.

Any and all new user or new pattern information is welcome and will be offered in a subsequent edition of the *Bulletin*.

English Version Of Japanese Perfin Catalog

Prepared by Sunao Adachi

Reformatted and paraphrased by Paul Mistretta (Pertins Club LM-111)

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How to read this catalog

1) Perfins are shown actual size.

- 2) Number of holes forming the pattern, or for handstamps their color.
- 3) Catalog number.

- 4) Name of identified or authorized user.
 5) Catalog value, in yen, of canceled copy; unused copies sell for much less.
 6) Name of Post Office(s) from which mail was validly sent, or from which canceled copies are known. And date of authorization of use, if known.
 7) Group name of definitives in which this pattern exists. Using Scott's #s they are:

新小判	# 75=>84
豹	# 91=>108
旧大正毛紙	#127=>147
新大正毛紙	#127a=>145a
震災	#17=>187
風景	#194=>196
昭和白紙	#239=>254
第1次昭和	#257=>275
第2次昭和	#325=>342
第3次昭和	#351=>361
第1次新昭和	#362=>370
第2次新昭和	#371/1414
星雲図案	#425=>436
昭和すみなし	#556//609 '.
昭和内本位	#S9=>SI2B

[only #(72) 75-84 is translated – P. 50 => Koban]

切手 means "stamp(s)"

- 8) Footnote. On this type the left bottom hole of the 'M' is missing in most copies.

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Perfins also exist in commemoratives, (shown here is type G54. See page 98 for other examples). It might be fun to collect these as a specialty. (We are lucky that no perfins are known in C1-2 and C8. Nor are they known in #85=>90 or #109=>112.) [Adachi Note: After this catalog came off the press one pattern was reported in #85.]

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Reference slip: This is an example of a pattern normally retained by the post office. However, some of them are now in collector's hands. Similar types D8 and D9 were identified by return addresses on covers, but D10 has not yet been found on cover. This slip identifies its user.

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A cover: An example of a single low value stamp (#240 with E65 perfins) on cover. Many seed

companies used perfins, but only a few covers remain intact.

Pictures shown below: Imperfectly (poorly) punched copies are often taken as new discoveries. These two are examples of poor punches, not new patterns. The punch on the left is E27 missing 6 of the horizontally punched holes in the pattern. The punch on the right is type H13 missing the letters 'BC'. This often happens if the pins are not set evenly in length; commonly by looking closely you may find faint depressions of the paper from these pins.

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The perfin OAS used by Osaka Asa-hi Shimbun Press is known only on postcards. It has yet to be found in a stamp.

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Photo: Perfins in the KOBAN series (#72=>84) are generally clean and neat.

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Postage due slip: Normally retained by the post office, this slip shows a copy of Mitsui Trading Co.'s perfin used in payment of the due fee. The company name is at the right of the affixed stamp. (This is another way to identify a user's name.)

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Mitsui perfin used abroad: This example was used in the U.S.A.; it shows a small and neat mark. In Hong Kong, the pattern differs slightly (becoming type G36). In China, it is the same as type W81 (also a smaller pattern).

Page 77

Multiples: Shown here are used multiples of R61 and O9. It is interesting that these stamps were applied one by one.

Page 91

Reference slip: [Apparently something is missing at the beginning of this sentence in the 'original'] of ¥ mark which means Japanese Yen. Used singles are plentiful but no cover has ever been seen. Until this post office slip appeared this pattern was considered doubtful. It was registered by Echizen-ya, Tazaki Co., which deals in yarns, handicrafts and dress materials. This pattern (W78) was licensed for use on Jan. 14, 1932 and after one renewal it expired on Dec. 31, 1941.

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Official Navy covers: A registered envelope sent to an Army commander in 1944 (left) and a cover mailed in 1943 to a staff officer at Naval Air HQ which has a censorship seal (right).

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An example with a large handstamp tying the stamp and envelope.

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Used first by Takeishi & Co., a fish dealer in Niigata (D), and then by Tokaido Books of Tokyo, these patterns are identical. (I even compared these with stamps soaked from covers.) Shown is a postcard dated Mar. 5, 1933, and a stamp dated Jan. --, '29 at Kesen-numa, Miyagi-ken (a fishing port); I speculate that the pattern owner was there with stamps and posted one (or more) perfins bearing letter(s). I am now trying to find out the latest date of use in Niigata and the earliest date of use in Tokyo (ideally the date when the machine changed hands becoming D9 rather than D8).

The two stamps on the left are high value issues used on international mails. One stamp has a 1943 cancel, but I wonder to what country it could be sent during wartime. The D9 perforator head was getting worn by 1943 and many stamps came out poorly punched (as shown).

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A postcard with perfins D28: Kinoshita Iron Works Ltd. printed postcards with a small block in red which showed through the perfins in the, then current, blue 1½ sen stamp (#129). In 1937 the postcard rate went up, and to have better (visual) effect with the new red stamp, they hand painted these background boxes black.

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Purposes for using control markings (briefly):

- A. Protection: Perfinned stamps were valid only for use by the authorized persons or organizations mailing at permitted post office(s). Their use prevented employee pilferage or (non-employee) theft.
- B. Advertising.
- C. Authentication: Used perfins on cover clearly identify the correspondence (and the pattern

used) as having come from the sender shown on the cover.

Page 103-104

History of Japanese Perfins

Beginning:

There is no firm record of the earliest use of security patterns, but the earliest known pattern used is type A1, a colorless embossing, used by the Oriental Bank of Yokohama (on Japan #50 issued in 1875). Its actual year of use is unknown because all stamps known with A1 embossing have only a cork chop cancel showing the "Y" of the Yokohama International Post Office.

The use of perfins type G41 in Japan #54 is the first known perfins use. This pattern was used in Shanghai, China, by the North China Herald. No date stamp is present on this stamp; it is cancelled with the propeller type cork chop of the Japanese P.O. in Shanghai.

There are no other examples known in Japanese stamps before #54, nor any subsequent use till #75. Hong Kong Shanghai Bank's Yokohama Branch (the next known user) began to use perfins H43 on June 29, 1891. Soon after that many foreign companies in Yokohama and Kobe followed. At that time [perfin punching] machines were not obtainable in Japan, so users took the easier and cheaper way of securing their postage, the use of a small rubber handstamps. It is believed that about 100 types were used, mostly in 1904-05 (based on the CDS [circular date stamps] on these stamps). Meanwhile, perfins machines were arriving from overseas, and the Japanese POD planned new postal regulations for these items.

1908 through 1945:

The new Postal Regulations of Sept. 11, 1908 (effective on Oct. 1) declared as follows:

- 1) Users of perforated or embossed stamps must present an application form with their name, address, occupation, and the name of the post office(s) where mailing will be done.
- 2) Their pattern (mark or letters) must be perforated or embossed clearly by machine.
- 3) Application must be made separately if such stamps will be used in two or more postal areas.
- 4) A sample stamp must be affixed on a piece of paper 5 x 15cm, with the company's or

individual's name, address and occupation on it. Reproduce this form as many times as is required by the POD.

- 5) The application fee is 5 yen (this, when the mail rate was only 0.03 yen)
- 6) Authorized patterns are valid for five years; the renewal fee is another 5 yen.

It is notable that this regulation made all handstamp markings invalid for postage. According to official post office records in Kobe, an inquiry was made on Nov. 11, 1908 to the POD as to the validity of rubber stamped security markings on stamps. The reply, dated Nov. 14, states that the only markings authorized on/in postage stamps are machine perforation or embossing. No handstamps will be allowed in the future.

Final stage of Japanese Perfins:

At the end of WWII, the most famous patterns, those of Mitsui Trading and the Yokohama Specie Bank,

disappeared from the perfins field, as did almost all other patterns.

The first perfins authorized after the war (on August 10, 1946) is type G38 used by Sunao Adachi and his philatelic club. Renewals by previous users and new applicants followed, including National City Bank, Osaka Branch (A3). But, before the perfins made a real comeback, a new star, "Meterstamp" [manufacturer of postal meters], appeared for big users of postage.

On June 1, 1961, the Japanese postal system made a big change in postage rates and various regulations. They stopped accepting new applications for, or those for renewal of, perfins use. Thus, all patterns lost validity after the expiration date of each type (which meant May 30, 1965 at the latest).

List of Patterns Lacking User Identification in the 1980 Adachi Catalog

A 2	B 84	E 4	E 77	G 45	K 1	L 11
B 9	C 2	E 9	E 78	G 50	K 4	M 7
B 12	C 3	E 10	E 79	G 57	K 10	M 9
B 14	C 5	E 11	E 84	G 58	K 11	M 27
B 16	C 6	E 12	E 86	G 63	K 23	M 33
B 22	C 7	E 13	E 92	G 64	K 26	N 3
B 24	C 11	E 14	F 11	G 65	K 27	N 9
B 26	C 14	E 17	F 13	G 66	K 30	P 1
B 27	C 16	E 18	F 14	H 3	K 31	P 4
B 28	C 19	E 19	F 15	H 11	K 32	P 5
B 32	D 3	E 24	F 20	H 28	K 36	Q 13
B 36	D 6	E 28	G 11	H 30	K 37	Q 18
B 45	D 7	E 2	G 12	H 31	K 38	Q 21
B 46	D 13	E 43	G 19	H 42	K 39	Q 32
B 49	D 17	E 44	G 23	H 44	K 40	R 3
B 52	D 18	E 46	G 24	H 46	K 42	R 4
?B54	D 24	E 52	G 25	H 49	K 43	R 5
-B69	D 25	E 54	G 26	H 51	K 44	R 7
B 70	D 26	E 57	G 28	H 52	K 45	R 16
B 72	D 32	E 60	G 30	H 56	K 47	R 17
B 74	D 36	E 61	G 34	J 2	L 1	R 25
B 79	D 38	E 64	G 39	J 5	L 4	R 26
B 81	E 1	E 67	G 40	J 6	L 5	R 29
B 82	E 3	E 71	G 43		L 7	R 31

R 37	R 58	S 14	?T 10	W 13	W 45	W 70
R 39	<u>R 59</u>	S 18	- 12	W 18	W 49	W 71
R 40	S 10	T 2	T 17	W 32	W 58	W 79
R 42	S 12	T 8	W 7	W 39	W 59	
R 52	S 13	T 9	W 12	W 41	W 66	
